



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**  
*DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES*  
*A Healthcare Service Agency*

Dannel P. Malloy  
Governor

Patricia A. Rehmer, MSN  
Commissioner

**Testimony by Patricia Rehmer, MSN, Commissioner**  
**Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services**  
**Before the Public Health Committee**  
**March 20, 2013**

Good Morning Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee. I am Commissioner Patricia Rehmer of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, and I am writing today to express our concerns with Senate Bill No. 1136, An Act Concerning Mental Health Services.

The bill as written would have DMHAS take responsibility for developing a program to address the emotional and behavioral health needs of youth between the ages of 12 and 26, and work with DCF and the Behavioral Health Partnership to establish a behavioral health consultation and care coordination system tool for primary care physicians that serve children. Currently, DMHAS provides services to adults with serious and persistent mental illness and substance use disorders. Our expertise and clinical knowledge base is directed at 18 year olds and older. DMHAS does not have staff with the expertise to provide behavioral health services to a younger population as contemplated in this bill. In order to meet the requirements of this bill, we believe that the committee should consider the expertise and experience of the Department of Children and Families, as well as the providers of children's behavioral health services and the State Department of Education who can implement programs in our school systems where many of these children and their parents can be reached. In times of limited resources, we believe the committee would be best served by looking at program models that exist and are currently funded by DCF such as The Bridge in West Hartford which appear to fit in with the proposed language and program models in Boston which are school based.

We would also ask the committee to once again consider the expertise in behavioral health consultation and care coordination systems tool for children that exists outside of DMHAS to address section 2 of the bill. In difficult fiscal times we do not want to be drawn away from our primary mission of serving adults with behavioral health disorders in order to meet the goals of this legislation before you.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.